

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Vehicle Modification Services Fact Sheet

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) may provide a range of vehicle modification services to eligible individuals with significant disabilities when (1) a thorough exploration of local public and private transportation resources indicates alternative transportation services are not available or appropriate; and (2) vehicle modification services are needed to achieve the goal established on an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Vehicle modification services are provided to an individual no more frequently than once every seven years, unless an exception is approved by the DORS Director.

What are your needs?

Assessment services are available through the Workforce & Technology Center and community providers to (1) help determine your specific needs as a driver or passenger, (2) show you modification options, and (3) develop a prescription for required modifications of a vehicle for you. If you are already experienced with vehicle modifications, your disability needs have not changed, and you are interested in the direct purchase option, you may decide that an assessment is not necessary.

DORS provides vehicle modifications only to vehicles meeting safety standards once modified. Modifications to a vehicle other than a standard sedan, van or minivan require prior approval of the BSS Director, who will explore the safety of such modified vehicles.

What are the options?

- **Assistance with direct purchase of pre-installed modifications in a specific new vehicle.**
This is an option, if you are willing to pay 25% of the cost of the modifications (in addition to the cost of the vehicle itself) in order to purchase directly from the vendor (required for modification services that exceed \$2,500). This gives you the flexibility to select the vendor, and it reduces the wait time associated with aftermarket installation of modifications. This also gives you the opportunity to try out the vehicle and modifications before purchase. You would in effect be purchasing a new vehicle with pre-installed modifications “off the lot.”
- **Assistance with direct purchase of pre-installed modifications in a used vehicle.**
This can be an option, if the vehicle meets certain age and mileage restrictions. Again, you must be willing to pay 25% of the cost of the modifications (in addition to the cost of the vehicle itself). This includes purchases from individual sellers. This option reduces wait time and gives you flexibility and the opportunity to try out the vehicle and modifications before purchase. You would in effect be purchasing a used vehicle with pre-installed modifications “off the lot” or from a private owner.
- **Assistance with modifications to be installed in a vehicle owned by you or a new vehicle purchased by you.**
Your vehicle and rehabilitation needs will be assessed by professionals employed by DORS or by DORS-approved community providers. It is necessary to consult with a modifications specialist in order to make sure the make/ and model of vehicle you own or are considering for purchase will meet your needs. Once a vehicle meeting your needs has been purchased, a prescription (VEAPA) will be written, and the modification job can be put out on bid to approved vendors, per the state procurement process. Instead of having the modification job put out on bid, you can use the VEAPA to purchase directly from a specific vendor by paying 25% of the cost of modifications to be installed.

Responsibilities & Requirements

- A **vehicle modifications assessment** and/or a **driving assessment will be required** in the following instances: when the bid process is being utilized; when there are questions about your ability to drive; and when there are questions about the type of modifications you may need.

- All vehicle modifications purchases **must be pre-approved in writing by a DORS authorization**. DORS will not reimburse you for modifications not preauthorized.
- With the purchase of a vehicle with *pre-installed* modifications, **you are responsible to determine that the modifications are in good working order and meet your needs**. This determination should be made through your practical hands-on assessment of the modifications prior to purchase. Contact your DORS counselor if you are unsure about what modifications you need **prior to purchase**.
- **You are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the vehicle** you decide to purchase. You should give appropriate consideration to whatever warranties may be available. DORS is not responsible for any problems you may experience with the vehicle itself.
- **You are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the vehicle modifications**. You are responsible to make use of whatever warranties are available in order to address such needs.
- You are strongly encouraged to obtain, at your own expense, **insurance** on vehicle modifications. DORS will not correct or replace vehicle modifications provided by DORS that have been damaged or destroyed in an accident.
- If you plan to drive the vehicle, **you must have a valid driver's license and MVA approval, if required**, or your potential to drive must be determined by a rehabilitation professional prior to purchase of modifications.
- **You may have an additional financial contribution** beyond what's discussed above, depending on your family income.
- A prescription for vehicle modifications applies only to the year/make/model of the vehicle specified on the **Vehicle Equipment and Adaptation Prescription Agreement (VEAPA)**. If there is a change in the year/make/model of the vehicle to be modified, the VEAPA must be reviewed and amended as necessary by staff completing the original assessment/prescription.

DORS Limitations

- State regulations prohibit DORS from purchasing vehicles. DORS assistance can only go towards the purchase of the modifications.
- DORS cannot provide assistance with modifications on vehicles not owned by you or your family. This includes leased vehicles. You will be required to **provide the original MVA vehicle title** to the DORS counselor so the counselor can make a copy. The *copy* of the MVA title will be retained in your DORS record of services. A bill of sale or sales receipt is not sufficient to meet this requirement.
- DORS can only provide you assistance with the least cost modification that meets your needs. You have the option to pay for upgrades in modifications not considered necessary equipment.

DORS can provide you with information and referral services on funding and loan options that may be available to you. DORS can provide or coordinate referral to other providers for other services associated with vehicle modifications such as assessment, adaptive driver's training, information and assistance on how to obtain your license, and other consultations that might be beneficial.

If you are in need of vehicle modifications, be sure to discuss your needs with your DORS Counselor as early in the rehabilitation process as possible.